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THE SOURCES OF ISRAEL'S MESSIANIC HOPE

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1. *Authenticity*.—The prophet's word is the poet's word. The first evidence of this is the repetition of thought in the *parallelismus membrorum*, the second is the distinct rhythm, however we may minutely define its character. Hence for the interpretation of the prophets we must not apply the laws of prose, as in the interpretation of the Old Testament stories, but the laws of poesy, which are different from those of prose. However, as there are different kinds of prose, so it is necessary to determine exactly the idea of *prophetic poesy*. This has not yet been done with the exactitude which is necessary to meet the problem of the history of Israel's literature.¹

Here may be noted only one point of view, in which the prophetic books are in sharp contrast with the narrative books. The prose of the Old Testament is not of ornate but of plain style; it is lacking in epithets, ornamented speech, figures, and comparisons; in short, it wants the "inner forms" of poesy. The beauty of Hebraic prose consists only in the arrangement of the independent tale—and not in that of the collections or books of tales—and in concise logical and artistic construction, the parts of which are necessary to the context as a whole and the limits of which are sharply fixed. There is not a detail too many, nor one too few; they touch one

¹ For the history of literature and for the method of scientific definition terms of art are necessary, which should be used with exact signification. I have looked for such terms in Skinner's *Genesis*, but do not find them. We ought to distinguish, for purposes of explanation, quite exactly between myths, tales, or stories, legends (in Hebraic, *midrash*), fairy tales, fables, sentences, or proverbs (originally of wise men), etc.; furthermore between tales, historical tales (by word of mouth), and historiography (written historical tales), etc. There is only one history of Israelitish literature of this sort, that by Hermann Gunkel (in *Die Kultur der Gegenwart*, edited by Paul Hinneberg. Berlin, 1906, pp. 51 ff.). A good beginning is made by Richard G. Moulton, *The Literary Study of the Bible*, revised ed., London (1899). The history of Israelitish literature is in the main a history of style.

another like the wheels of a watch. Therefore, for the commentator, who should be a reproducing artist, it is comparatively easy to discover incoherence in the artistic whole, to perceive fissures and clefts, to show gaps and to supply that which is lacking, to remove inorganic additions, and to set apart secondary work. Such criticism is quite inapplicable to the books of the prophets. Although they are artists and their creations are not without an inner logic and a constraint of outer form, yet *the abrupt, hasty, and unquiet style is characteristic of prophetic poesy* in contrast with the clear, mature, and quiet manner of the prose writers. This difference is to be interpreted by the fact that the prophets are always of a troubled temper and are seized in their innermost soul. They are ever pronouncing their deliverances in excitation and passion, torn by the tempest of furious wrath or overpowered by the ardor of enthusiastic love. Their words are vibrant with the blessed paroxysms of communion with God and the secret mysteries of ecstasy. He who would understand them may not approach with sober and cool intellect, but he himself must feel something of this emotion; above all, he must have in mind that the psychic laws for excited men are different from those for normal ones. The *visionary* element brings the prophets near to the dreamers; their lyric is dream-lyric, their poesy is dream-poesy. Hence it is not only false, but even absurd, to transfer the principles of higher criticism, well approved in the interpretation of the Hexateuch, to prophetic poesy, which is governed by its own laws.

In spite of their intense experiences, the prophets in the expression of their thoughts adhere to the traditional forms, just as do the modern poets, who likewise, notwithstanding their boundless individualism, seldom break through the bars of the usual poetic types. The determination of the various forms of prophetic speech is again a task in the literary study of the Bible, which has scarcely been undertaken as yet. First of all, it is to be considered that the prophetic writings are not books of great, universal conception like the Homeric Epos, but every book is a collection, or an anthology of many prophetic poems by the same or by different authors. Unhappily, these poems are preserved in continuous text without any marks to separate one song from another. It

is, therefore, *the first duty of exegesis, to fix the beginning and the end of each prophetic poem*; for without this preliminary work interpretation is impossible. Imagine Goethe's lyrics printed like Isaiah's songs! Only a barbarian would do such a thing. But he would be no less a barbarian who would venture to treat Goethe's poems thus disfigured as if they had an inner unity, or who would undertake to comment upon an arbitrary combination of several songs having no connection with one another. Is not that interpreter then also a barbarian who applies such a method to Isaiah?

By good hap, the task that arises here for the history of literature is not so difficult as it seems at first sight. In determining the prophetic poems, we not only avail ourselves of identity of situation and of aesthetic judgments; but we obtain another approach from the typical introductions and conclusions which frame all the songs and indicate their type. "Thus Jahve has spoken" is said usually in the beginning; "for the mouth of Jahve has spoken it" is added frequently at the end. A collection and investigation of such phrases and similar formulae and their importance for fixing the limits of prophetic poems is a pressing necessity in order to advance our understanding of the prophets and to forward the progress of literary study. He who has an eye for such things soon observes that the songs are generally very short. In modern literary usage we should not call them "poems," but simply "sentences" or "words." The prophets were no "rhetoricians" nor "preachers," but *poets of little sentences* orally pronounced.

For our purpose there are to be considered among the many species of prophetic poesy only two, and they meet us in all the prophetic books: the "threats" and the "promises." These are in direct contrast with each other both in content and in temper. The threats predict ill fortune, the promises, on the contrary, good fortune for Israel. In the threats, therefore, lives the wrath of the prophet against the sins of Israel; hence the threats are mostly combined with "denunciatory words," to give plausibility to the coming calamity. The promises, however, are filled with the love of the prophet for his people; hence they are often joined with an "exhortation" to bring the hearers back to the right way and to lead them to happiness. Each of the two species has run its

own course of development, which a study of the material would readily reveal. This too is a new problem of literary study well rewarding labor.

The promises are as different from the threats as love-songs from funeral songs. Certainly the two species are sometimes combined in the same poem, but usually they are independent of each other. Unless peculiar reasons force us, *we have no right to establish a connection between the threat and the promise*; for a poem, rounded in itself, should not be joined with another poem, likewise finished in itself. This simple consideration disposes of nearly all the arguments against the authenticity of the promises, or the messianic hopes almost identical with them. It is said that the prophet could not threaten and promise at one and the same time. But in fact, he does not. The conjunction of the two is purely arbitrary. But there is no reason why the prophet should not threaten at one time and promise at another time, as the poet may now mourn the death of his friend, and again may sing as a lover.

It may be objected that these comparisons are lame. The prophet predicting to his people sometimes ill fortune, sometimes good fortune could not be filled now with burning wrath and then with glowing love for Israel. Why not? Also in this case he is like the poet; both are *animated by changing moods*. Is this surprising in such impassioned men as the prophets? They were no dogmatists obliged to avoid contradictions; they did not endeavor, for the most part, to declare their opinions systematically, so much so that it is impossible for us to apprehend all the details. Commonly the threats are spoken as absolutely as the promises; now the whole people shall be ruined without anyone being saved; again the prosperity of the new time shall be such that no one shall be lost. These prophecies exclude each other, but besides them we find a series of connecting sentences showing us how the prophets fitted them each to the other. That a great calamity would break upon Israel, they were always assured; they were doubtful only of one point, whether Jerusalem would escape the coming destruction or not. But after the ill fortune the good fortune would follow; yet not inevitably, but only if the remnant should repent. This thought Isaiah has embodied in the name of his son

(Isa. 7:3). If Israel does good, Jahve will be gracious "to the remnant of Joseph" (Amos 5:15); if Jerusalem is purified in the melting furnace, then it shall return as it was at the beginning (Isa. 1:25, 26).

Though threat and promise may be found separately, yet calamity and prosperity form a chronological unity which, however, is not always clearly stated, because it is to be completed as a matter of course: first calamity, then prosperity. By this consecution the logical contradiction of threat and promise is annulled. At any rate, it was dependent upon the prophets' inner experiences and moods, whether they were putting themselves in the time of ill fortune, painting horrid pictures of terror, or whether they were plunging into the time of happiness that was to follow later on. Now a cursory glance teaches us that with the greater prophets the threats are much more frequent than the promises. Hence it follows that the canonical prophets were *predominantly announcers of calamity*. Jeremiah (28:8) intimates that they were exclusively so. But he has said this in his conflict with "the prophet of grace," Hananiah, and in polemics one likes to be pointed and one is inclined to sharpen the contrast. According to the vision of his vocation Jeremiah was called to be a prophet (1:10), not only "to destroy, to ruin, and to demolish," but also "to build and to plant." It is characteristic that the negation is placed first. The greater prophets were, it is true, announcers of grace and good fortune, but they were so only in the second place. There was a time or there were situations, when they denied the grace of God totally, or when they clothed their idea of the great misery that was to come in such harsh words that the grace of God seemed to be excluded. Nor are we allowed to forget their controversy with their prophet-brethren who announced the contrary. Even this exaggeration knowing neither indulgence nor restraint reveals its very prophetic character, for it results from the passion of these men who did not think the golden mean to be the best way. In calmer moments they accepted the legitimacy of the expectation of good fortune that existed in Israel (Amos 5:14, "as you have said"); but they thought the realization of this prophecy to be possible only by the conversion of Israel. It is no hazard, on the contrary, it is

worthy of notice that we never meet these announcements in the form of "threats," due to the wrath of the prophets, but nearly always in the "exhortations" that result from a milder disposition of soul.

Even these *limited prophecies* are so characteristic that their authenticity is not to be doubted. But if we think the coexistence of complete denial and limited acknowledgment of God's grace to be authentic tradition, we have no scruples in crediting the greater prophets with being the authors of *the promises* or messianic hopes, *which have no limit at all*. If the prophets were only announcers of calamity, had they only come to ruin and to demolish, then was their god an enigmatical God, and his doing was as senseless as the work of a peasant who is always ploughing and never seeding (Isa. 28:22-29). God, who governs not only the history of Israel but that of the whole world, would never have *inflamed* the prophets if his plan had been *the eternal No*. They would never have understood him, if he had spoken *his eternal Yes* only for the heathen. Though the sinful Israelites might be as indifferent to him as the Negroes (Amos 9:7), yet there was an Israel of faith and hope which the prophets could not give up. They did not know how it was to come; they felt no obligation to paint the future with scientific exactitude, but they were sure of one thing: though God should bring to ruin his whole people, yet would he find means sufficient to awaken from even the stones seed of Abraham. If we deprive the prophets of this idea, we make them demigods whose feet do not touch the earth.

Surely the expectation of God's grace must be understood as a matter of faith and a certitude of soul; but it is impossible to declare its origin by this fact, for the messianic hope has its root in the soil of popular imagination which is older than all prophecy. For this we not only have internal arguments, but Amos says plainly: "Then Jahve the God Zebaoth will be with you *as you have said*" (5:14); and still more distinctly: "Woe to those *wishing near* the day of Jahve" (5:18). Consequently, there were already people at the time of Amos who knew of the day of Jahve and longed for it as a day of light and happiness. These words are not sufficient to reconstruct the *popular expectation of grace*; one is obliged

to add all the other traits of the prophecies which may certainly or probably be traced back to popular ideas. That is all the more reason why one should not form one's opinion in advance without having a comprehensive survey of the traditional facts.

If we look back from this preliminary knowledge, we understand now much more easily why the prophets, at least sometimes, gave promises. They were men of flesh and blood, and therefore sons of their time; they were earth-born and could not deny their origin in spite of the isolated grandeur of their thoughts which led them up to a giddy height. The messianic prophecies which are with difficulty adapted to the sphere of the prophet's ideas are certainly taken in part from the popular tradition. But if in reality they were spoken by the greater prophets in whose books they are to be read, we expect as a matter of course that they will show traces of prophetic spirit and that their religion and ethics will be much more elevated. Meditating upon the promises, two irrepressible questions that are always to be kept in sight present themselves to us: What ideas has the prophet taken from others? How much has he transformed them and adapted them to the actual situation?

2. *Contents.*—I confine myself to the pre-exilic promises in which the Messiah himself is spoken of, treating the others only as may be necessary. The most instructive is Mic. 5:1-5, a passage which, from the mention of Asshur, surely dates from the Assyrian time, and which therefore may have been written by Micah about the time of Hezekiah. From the smallest district,¹ so it is written there in a spirited antithesis, the Messiah, the greatest king, shall come. Beth Ephrath is the native place of David. Consequently the prophet does not expect a descendant of David, but the return of David himself. The ruler of the last days is at the same time the ruler of the first days, a new antithesis which can be applied to David only *cum grano salis* and which is transferred to him from

¹ I read with others in vs. 1, וְאֵתָהּ בֵּית אֶפְרַת הַצֶּעִיר בְּאַלְפֵי יְהוּדָה; vs. 4, remove וְהָיָה זֶה שְׁלוֹם, a gloss to the preceding וְיָשְׁבוּ, and read בְּאַדְמַתְנוּ וְהָקִים (הָקִים עַל), "to establish over," like Jer. 23:4; the subject is Jahve or his Messiah). The ending לְנוּ, being on the margin, has come into the text at a wrong place; it belongs to vs. 5, where is to be read וְהָקִים לְנוּ and furthermore בְּפֶתְיָהוּ. In vs. 3, remove יְהוּדָה, and in vs. 5, אֶרֶץ, *metri causa*.

another one. "Therefore," because the Messiah is to be born, "he [Jahve] gives them up" (the Israelites of the north). And so it must be, for, as everybody knows, the time of good fortune is immediately preceded by a time of ill fortune. The author alludes to ideas well known, otherwise he could not continue with the conclusive "therefore." One ought to imagine the birth of the Messiah to be the beginning of happiness. But only, when the distress has risen to the utmost, "she who travaileth will bring forth." The prophets speaks *ἐν μυστηρίῳ*; for who the queen-mother of the Messiah is, he does not know. The new birth of David is a great secret, blessed be the woman that bears him! Micah's dependence upon Isaiah is excluded by the fact that the greater prophets committed no plagiarism; and, what is more, Mic. 5:4 ff. contains ideas which we do not find in Isaiah. The first consequence of the messianic time is the reconstruction of Israel into a united nation: "Then the rest of its [Israel's] brethren will return to the sons of Israel." The Israelites of the north are already in the exile; hence this promise is pronounced after 722 B.C. Secondly, the Messiah, the pious king, will govern his people in the name and by the power of Jahve, and so his kingdom will be a kingdom of peace and will extend over the whole world. All nations are subject to the Messiah, even the Assyrians. If they are coming to subject Judah, as they did Northern Israel, then it will be the worse for them; for in that case, the Messiah has come to save Judah from this great distress. The author therefore expected the return of David soon after the conquest of Samaria, before Asshur had advanced the second time to menace Judah. Here, too, we find older ideas that cannot be fully explained by the situation of the contemporary history, for it is said: When Asshur dares enter the sacred, inviolable Judah, then "seven princes and eight human governors" will be established to rule over "the country of Nimrod" with sword and iron, and never more will they dare cross the plans of Jahve and disturb the peace of the world.

In the promise of Micah the combination of the Messiah with David who shall bring back prosperity to the united Israel, is dependent upon the contemporary history. Behind this idea of David's return, however, we recognize the older mythological

thought of *the returning primeval king*. To him is also attributed the kingdom of peace and the world-dominion which cannot have had its origin in the remembrance of David's time. The Assyrians being the worst enemies of the Israelites, their subjection is easily explained by the state of the contemporary history. But behind this we find another idea which is a great deal older and which may be explained by mythological parallels which become clear only in later times: the Messiah can establish his kingdom only when *the satanic powers* are subjugated. While usually one shepherd is sufficient to tend a flock, the satanic Asshur must have seven or eight princes to rule it with iron scepters. So the time of prosperity is preceded by a terrible time of distress.

This promise of Micah touches closely the promise of Isaiah 7:10-17, which was not written down by the prophet himself but by one of his disciples.¹ According to the context, Isaiah had announced to Ahaz the deliverance from the calamity prepared by the Ephraimites and Arameans. As vss. 10 ff. belong to the same time (about 732 B.C.), we expect a promise. Now Isaiah wants to give a sign that he may show himself a prophet sent by God. Ahaz, however, resists him, because he will not tempt God. The prophet is highly irritated, for this resistance is an offense to Jahve. Therefore he himself will tell of a miracle that Jahve is going to perform. This introduction must be followed by a terrible threat against Ahaz. The man who wrote this down thought the following oracle to be a promise for Judah, but a threat against Ahaz. His conception must be ours, however the situation may have been invented. Any exegesis that does not do justice to this double-character of the passage is unsuccessful.² A young wife is pregnant, she will bear a son and will call him Immanuel;

¹ Compare vs. 13, **וְיֵאמֶר**, the third (not the first!) person singular, and vs. 3, **אֶל־יִשְׁעִיָּהוּ**. He who corrects to the first person falsifies the tradition. From this is to be explained the peculiar vs. 10, **וַיִּסֶּה יְהוָה**; the "redactor" identifies Isaiah with Jahve and heightens the consciousness of the prophet a little. Isaiah is here degraded to a worker of miracles, and a magician.

² Vs. 14, **הָעַלְמָה** = "a young wife"; the article is an idiom of the Hebraic. Vs. 15 from **לִרְעֵמְךָ** till **בְּטֶבֶל** is a gloss (cf. vs. 16). From vs. 17 remove **וְעַל־עַמְּךָ**; for "over thee and thy family" belong together. The verse becomes meaningless through the words "over thy people." Remove **אֶת מֶלֶךְ אַשּׁוּר** with others.

he will eat honey and milk. Before the boy has grown up, Ephraim and Aram will be devastated. But God will bring upon Ahaz and his family days such as have not been since the division of the kingdom. Nothing but the birth of Immanuel can be the miracle; no other sign is spoken of in the oracle. Indeed, he is a mysterious boy, for his birth warrants the destruction of the enemies. Immanuel can be no other than the Messiah, with whom the days of happiness *must* come for Judah. Here we recognize distinctly that the messianic hope is particularly Judaistic; the happiness of Judah can begin only after the destruction of Northern Israel. As with Micah, so here the coming of the Messiah is preceded by a time of calamity. There the Assyrians menaced Judah, but here the Syrians and Ephraimites. In both cases the scheme is the same: first calamity, then fortune; only its content is changed to the contemporary historical situation. It was the enormity of the distress that awakened in the prophets the belief that they would live in the "last days," and which made them sure that the Messiah was already conceived. If human help seemed to be impossible, the marvelous child, the Messiah, was to be born. Hence it is clear what an immense danger the Syro-Ephraimitish war must have been for Judah; in those times the hearts of the king and of the people trembled, "as the trees of the wood tremble in the storm." Isaiah agreed with this idea, but his feelings were opposite to those of the others, for he expected the intervention of Jahve and the speedy appearance of the Messiah. *For this reason* he demanded of the king "quietness" and "faith" (7:4, 9). Like Micah, Isaiah, too, speaks in a mysterious manner of the young wife who shall bear. Nobody knows who she is, not even the prophet; only one thing is known, that in the immediate future the Messiah shall be born of a woman. Contrary to Micah, we here have nothing of David's return; it even seems to be excluded, for finally the prophet turns against the governing dynasty: it shall see worse days than at the time of the kingdom's division, when in Northern Israel a foreign dynasty mounted the throne.¹ With these words,

¹ The words "since Ephraim left Judah" are well understood, if they are transferred to the dynasty and not to the people of Judah. For the people had suffered worse things in the time before David than after the division of the kingdom. Here is clearly meant: "Such evil days as never before."

the fall of the Davidic dynasty is announced: when the Messiah mounts the throne, then "the scepter will be taken from Judah," as is already said in other words in Gen. 49:10. When Herod hears that the Messiah is born, he orders the child to be killed because now the end of his dynasty has come.

So the promise of Isaiah is interpreted from the historical situation. Yet there remain still some mysterious traits which apparently are not necessary and which therefore must belong to an older popular tradition. Why does Isaiah speak of the *queen-mother of the Messiah*? This strikes us the more forcibly as Micah, independently of Isaiah, uses the same term; remarkable, too, is the fact that neither mentions the father, as if the child had no father. At any rate, we must think of a mysterious birth, without identifying it with the Persian motive of the "virginal conception." Moreover, why are "milk and honey," the food of the Messiah spoken of? We should like to pass over this detail, for it is of no importance for the context. But according to the independent oracle (7:21, 22), "milk and honey" are the food of the saved people and a sign of the prosperity of the new time.¹ Hence, when Immanuel eats milk and honey, the messianic time has come. These two traits (the mother and the food) disprove the usual interpretation of Immanuel being a creation of Isaiah to make evident the shortness of the time.

Also Isa. 9:1-6 is a promise,² which becomes extremely clear by noting the final clause: "May the zeal of Jahve do this." In his faith, the prophet thinks it to be already present. He has certainly hoped that it would come soon; for he never would have sung songs of the end of the days if he had thought this end to be far off. At first, in three pictures he describes the great joy as being near: As the dead will rejoice when they see the "great light" of the sun in the Hades, as the reapers shout when they are gathering in a rich harvest, as the warriors exult when they are

¹ 7:18-19 (cf. the introduction, **וְהָיָה בְּיוֹם הַהוּא**; 7:20 (**בְּיוֹם הַהוּא**); 7:21-22 (**וְהָיָה בְּיוֹם הַהוּא**), and 7:23-25 (**וְהָיָה בְּיוֹם הַהוּא**) are independent oracles, partly "threats," partly "promises."

² Vs. 2, read **הַגִּילָה**; vs. 3, **מוֹשֶׁת**; vs. 4, **מִגְאֵלָה**; vs. 6, **לְמִרְבֵּה הַמִּישׁוֹר**, according to the parallel **שְׁלוֹם**.

distributing a great booty, so will the people rejoice, when Jahve appears to break the yoke of the tyrant. That is the first deed Jahve does; the insupportable burden of the foreign yoke has an end. Here, too, the new time is the salvation from a time of misery; just because of this, the joy will be endless. Secondly, the prophet adds the destruction of the war-boots and the war-mantles, a poetic paraphrase of the fact that war will have an end forever. It begins the kingdom of peace, the quietness of which shall never more be disturbed. The third is the most grandiose: Then a child shall be born who will mount the throne of David, in order to rule with justice through all eternity. Also here the Messiah's birth is spoken of in dark, mysterious words. He is said to sit on the throne of David, to renew the splendor of the old Davidic kingdom, but it is not said that he is a descendant of David's house. At any rate, he is not thought to be the prince royal, the son of the reigning king, whose birth could not be celebrated *ἐν μυστηρίῳ*. The Messiah, being the king of eternity, has no successors.

Ideas depending upon the situation of the time are not at all to be recognized in this oracle, and therefore it cannot be dated exactly. But we have no urgent argument against the authorship of Isaiah, in whose book it is found. Nevertheless it may be said that the contents of this prophecy are much older than Isaiah. The prophet might very well have expected a king who should break the yoke of Judah's enemies, but for what reason should he hope that there would never again be war? This supposes a complete conversion and a change of man and civilization which is not to be explained psychologically by the situation of the contemporary or of the future time. Neither here nor anywhere else does Isaiah present any economic or humanistic reason which might have produced this belief in him. We might record the prophetic piety which thinks absolute confidence in God to be incompatible with confidence in armies and horses, but even from this the idea of universal peace cannot have its origin; for then the foreign nations menacing Israel would have been supposed to be equal to the prophets in their faith. Here it is not at all religion that is spoken of. On the contrary, the peace of the world is as evident as the destruction of the enemies. Besides this, we have to explain why Isaiah

endowed his Messiah with demigod-like attributes: "Marvelous of counsel, God of battle, father of eternity, prince of peace." No other than Isaiah has insisted upon the unequaled grandeur of Jahve; only God is majestic, and in his presence all men, even the kings, are "flesh and not spirit." How could the same prophet transfer the attribute of God, the *El Gibbor*, to the king that was to come?

The third messianic prophecy of Isa. 11:1-9 throws light on the origin of the ideas and leads back to Micah.¹ At first Isaiah celebrates the king himself who will sprout forth from "the tree-stump of Jesse." As David has come from the root of Jesse, so the Messiah will be no other than a David *redivivus*. This was also our interpretation of Mic. 5:1 ff. Furthermore, Ezek. 34:23 f.; 37:24 f. says the same thing bluntly (cf. Hos. 3:5). The threat against Ahaz may be easily connected with it; for the image of the tree-stump announces that the reigning dynasty will be dethroned. But there may have been two different ideas; sometimes the Messiah is David himself, sometimes, however, a "sprout" for David. It is worthy of note that the prophet never speaks of David's "son" or "descendant," but always of David himself or of a "sprout," grafted to Jesse's or David's tree like a *foreign* sprig. Why should Isaiah not have pronounced different views of such vague things, of which nobody knows anything? The chief matter is the glorification of Jahve and his Messiah *in Jerusalem*. The new king that will then come will surpass the rulers of the present; he will possess the spirit of Jahve seven fold, superhuman knowledge and titanic power. Secondly, Isaiah celebrates *the return of paradise*. He does not do this bluntly, for this would be prosaic. The antique, primitive style demanded concrete images which expressed well the abstract ideas. When the wild animals become domestic, they change their nature and become like those of the Golden Age, in the land of the gods. And when men are no longer sinners, they too obtain a new nature and become like the innocent children of paradise. Hence we may retrospectively conclude that the end of war and the beginning of universal peace are psychologically to be interpreted from mytho-

¹ Vs. 1, read יִפְרֹחַ; remove vs. 3a; vs. 4, read עֲרִיץ; vs. 6, רַעִים (instead of וְמִרְיָא); vs. 7, תַּתְרַעֲנֶנּוּ; vs. 8, מַעֲרָת, parallel to חֹרֶר.

logical and popular ideas and not from prophetic ones. Besides this, we may conclude that even the Messiah here painted is in reality not David but the king of the primeval times. So the end is the return of the beginning.

The same conclusion is suggested to us by Mic. 5:1 ff. It is made still clearer for us, if we add Isa. 1:21-26.¹ At first the prophet here threatens Jerusalem with retribution, because justice has been prostituted. But he adds then a promise in the event of Jerusalem's conversion. If it is purified in the melting-furnace, "then I will make thy judges as they were in the beginning and thy advisers as in the commencement." This can be no allusion either to Solomon or to David; for the time of Solomon was, it is true, known by its justice, but it was not "in the beginning." We might think the time of David to be the time of commencement, but we nowhere hear of any particular deed of justice of David nor of his counselors. Perhaps we might think of the time of Moses, which often appeared to the prophets an ideal time, but it is only the time of the "young love" between Jahve and Israel, and therefore important only in a religious sense, never in an ethical or forensic relation. So we have no alternative but to take the words in their proper sense: "the beginning" is the beginning of the world. As in other places the king of the primitive time, so here the state of the primeval time is glorified for its justice. The end returns to the beginning. So we see that all the ideas of the messianic end-time which do not depend upon the historical situation, have their origin in the ideas of the Golden Age or the paradise. In reality, they are of mythological origin, though we meet them in a historical form and sometimes inserted with specific prophetic ideas. Most of the hopes were already current among the people; by the prophets they were merely changed, adapted to the circumstances of the historical situation, and deepened ethically and religiously. The analysis of the messianic hopes confirms and completes at the same time the account of Amos that the expectation of a happy time was alive in the hearts of his contemporaries.

¹ Vss. 21-24, a threat (vss. 21-23, introduction or scolding-word; vs. 24, *corpus* or oracle); vss. 25-26, promise. The two belong together, as the first and the last line show. For vs. 25 read: מִעֲלִירָהּ and בִּכְרִי.

3. *Origin*.—The first question is, whether the source of the messianic hope lies on Israelitish ground or not. This question is answered by a comparison of the messianic prophecies with the ideas of paradise. For we suspect that the two are identical, or at any rate correspond with each other in the main, because the colors portraying the end-time are taken from the beginning time. We may give up the full congruence, since only a part of the Israelitish paradise-tales is extant. Besides Gen. chaps. 1-3, there may have been many other tales, of which we know nothing; moreover, Gen. chaps. 1-3 existed in many forms, before these chapters got their present canonical form. But even if we have regard to these possibilities, there must be some agreement between the beginning time and the end-time. We do in fact find it so in some particulars. The messianic hopes of a *universal peace* in the world of men and animals surpass, it is true, what is told in the Israelitish tales of the Golden Age. But some traits of the present tradition teach us that there once were tales of paradise in accordance with the expectations of the end-time; the dry precepts concerning food (Gen. 1:29; 2:16) are the last survival of a poetic tale about the peace of the Golden Age, unspoiled by any shedding of blood. The tale of Cain and Abel (Gen. 4:1 ff.), though having another origin, tells us, in its present position (immediately after the expulsion from Eden!), who the first murderer was. Then grew up the institutions of civilized life, among them the gild of metal-workers, who created the sword and with the sword the practice of blood-revenge (Gen. 4:22 ff.). Thus mankind fell into the deepest depths of sin, and withdrew from the blessed peace of paradise; but at the end of the days mankind will return to the conditions of the beginning.

The ideal food of the messianic time is *milk and honey* (Isa. 7:15, 21 f.; Amos 9:13; Joel 4:18). The men of paradise ate fruits of trees (Gen. 1:29; in 2:16 corn is added). This idea is scarcely originated by the Israelites or by the Palestinians, but in a land of tropical climate, the inhabitants of which are living upon banana trees or date-palms. The food-ideal of the Israelitish peasants was bread in the morning and flesh in the evening (I Kings 17:6), because corn was produced and cattle breeding was pursued.

Milk and honey are, however, still today the main food of the Beduins and were longed for by the Israelites as long as they tented like nomads on the outskirts of cultivated land. Hence for its fertility they called Palestine the land where milk and honey flow instead of water, like the land of the gods. This messianic hope is to be understood from Israelitish views, although being the opposite of the pictures of paradise known to us. Besides this we meet other expectations more exactly in agreement with the economic circumstances of Palestine. In the end-time there will be an abundance of wine (Gen. 49:11; Amos 9:13 f.), of corn (Amos 9:13; Isa. 4:2), of figs and olive-trees (Hos. 2:23 f.; Mic. 4:4). All the more peculiar is the mention of milk and honey.

But we find other ideas which cannot at all be of Israelitish origin. The return of paradise is combined with *the return of the paradise-king*. Genesis knows nothing of a primeval king, and in this case it is not permissible to complete the tradition, for the older Israelites may certainly be said not to have known a paradise-king, because the basis of such an idea was missing. Israel could be told of a paradise-king only since the time of Saul or David; i.e., since a kingdom existed in Israel. If the tradition be ever so much transformed, Moses and Joshua are not made kings, to say nothing of the first man. It corresponds with the family life of their own tribal society, that the Israelites conceive paradise as including only the family of Adam. Therefore the idea of the primeval king must have its source among a people whose kingdom is rooted in the oldest times, even out of mind, who cannot at all imagine a life without a king and for whom it is necessary to think of the first man as the first king. So our eyes turn from Israel to the extremely old kingdoms of the nearer Orient, to Egypt and Babylonia.¹

To this may be added a second argument, *the deification of the Messiah*. Some traces are found, it is true, that even in Israel the reigning rulers were extolled like gods or sons of gods, although not as often as in Egypt (Pss. 2, 45, 110, which are not messianic). But such courtly ideas are not to be supposed in the case of the prophets

¹ It may be briefly noted that similar ideas are likewise found in Greek literature; cf. Hesiod: *ἔργα καὶ ἡμέραι* 111. But are they of Greek origin?

who dared to tell the kings their faults in such a manner that they sometimes offend the royalist sensibilities of modern men. The more peculiar, then, is the fact that they have adorned the messianic king without scruple with such godlike attributes as "God of battle" or "father of eternity," with epithets usually reserved for Jahve alone. We shall understand this best by presuming that the prophets are depending upon an older tradition. This tradition is created by men who were accustomed to elevate their kings into the god's sphere and who made no great difference between a king and a god. As Israel borrowed the institution of kingship from the peoples of the nearer Orient, so it may have accepted too the expectation of the messianic god-king, perhaps through the channel of the Canaanites. In this respect the prophets were not afraid to draw upon Israel's popular hopes, because the godlike attributes were applied not to the king of the present, but of the end-time, to Him who was to bring the beginning of God's kingdom. The less the contemporary ruler accomplished the prophetic ideal, the more in contrast the prophets liked to exalt the Messiah.

The idea of the Messiah, since it is not of Israelitish origin, we think to have been first borrowed from the Canaanites, for at any rate the Canaanites performed the part of mediators, if we suppose a foreign source. The very close connection between the Messiah and David's dynasty teaches us that Israel's messianic hopes got their first stamp in Jerusalem or in Judah, because the Northern Israelites were not immediately interested in a Judaic dynasty. So in the first place, our eyes turn to the Canaanitish past of Jerusalem. Unhappily, the tales of this town never having been gathered, we know of its past less than of many other little villages in Northern Israel or in the Negeb. Only by the way, do we hear of *Melchizedek*, and this very same man causes us to raise the question whether he is thought to be the primeval king. This is likely, for he is made the contemporary of Abraham and not of Joshua or of David (Gen. 14:18 ff.). As Abraham is the ancestor of the Israelites, so Melchizedek may have been the ancestor of Jerusalem's kings or the founder of Jerusalem's dynasty. According to the court-style, the first king must have reigned in the first time, and there is documentary evidence in Ps. 110:4, where a pre-exilic king of

Jerusalem is celebrated in an unusual manner, probably on the day of his accession to the throne. An oracle announces him to be "a priest of eternity like Melchizedek." The contemporary ruler is being glorified here as the messianic king of the end-time, Melchizedek being regarded as the demigod-like king of the first time. It does not matter if this priest-king is made by Gen. chap. 14 the contemporary of Abraham. Perhaps we may suppose that likewise all the other demigod-like attributes of Ps. 110 are transferred from Melchizedek to the reigning ruler. Then Melchizedek would be born "upon the holy mountains" (of the sky) like the Babylonian gods or kings.¹ In this case it would be allowable to combine the ideas of the Canaanite, or more exactly of the Jerusalemite court-style with those of Babylonia.

Up to this time unmistakable traces of a paradise-king in Babylonia are missing; with great probability, however, we may refer to the *myth of Adapa* which was found in the Egyptian archives of Tell-el Amarna. That this myth was known in Palestine, the paradise-tale shows us; for the main motive (the loss of immortality) is borrowed from the Adapa myth, though considerably darkened. For this reason Adapa must be the primeval king, if he be never so called. Characteristically, the Israelites have made the "king" a simple "man." According to the introduction of the myth, the wise Adapa was not only a priest (baker, cup-bearer, and cook), but also king of Eridu, "to make known the lots [?] of the land," "created the ruler [?] of mankind"; his commandments were transgressed by no one; his was a blessed time. But he wants immortality—only this thing. When he has lost it forever, Anu cannot give him the royal dignity, as it is usually interpreted. On the contrary, Anu seems to prophesy his return at the end of the days: "Then Anu disposed for him [?] the fate, to cast forth rays of his government even unto the future of the days." Since Sennacherib calls himself the second "Adapa," from this point of

¹ I read Ps. 110:3:

ביום הִלָּדְתָּ לְךָ ॥ בְּהַרְרֵי קֹדֶשׁ ॥ מֵרָחֹם שָׁתַר ॥ כְּשֶׁל יִלְדָּתִיָּה ॥

"On thy birthday I begot thee on the holy mountains like dew from the womb of Aurora" (another *Helal ben Schachar*). Perhaps Isa. 1:26 and Jer. 23:6 allude to the time and the name of Melchizedek. Possibly we find Jerusalemite primeval tales in Ps. 46, 76; Isa. 28:14-22; it must suffice to indicate this.

view as well Adapa must be the primeval king returning at the end-time. Besides this we know nothing of Babylonian prophecies either of an unhappy time or of a happy time, aside from a late notice from Berossus in Seneca.

On the contrary, we now possess *Egyptian prophecies* of many times from 2000 B.C. to 300 A.D.¹ Most interesting is the fact that threats and promises are connected here as in the Old Testament. Up to this time no critic has dared to deny the genuineness of the "messianic hopes" of the Egyptians. Should not that which is correct for the Egyptian prophets be suitable also to those of Israel? Therefore threat and promise belong together antithetically; the time of happiness cannot be better painted than against the background of the time of distress. This antithesis has become a typical style, not only for the Egyptians but also for the Israelites. The scheme is fixed, but its content ever changes according to the historical situation. The characteristic difference in the oracles of the two peoples is that the Egyptians only repeat the usual phrases, while the Israelites transform the type individually here as everywhere. Therefore the messianic prophecies in Israel had a long and important history, while in Egypt they remained unaltered through the centuries. Because of this long continuance of prophecy, Egypt is thought to be the land of its origin, since the oldest text, surely prophetic, was there delivered about 2000 B.C. This is by no means the earliest possible date, for the prophetic scheme must be still older, inasmuch as ill fortune and good fortune are there strung together without any interposition. From this self-revelation we may recognize the typical character of this prophecy. Moreover, it is remarkable that we meet cosmical elements in the picture of the calamity: "At that time the sun will shine [only] one hour; one cannot see, when it will be mid-day." So the distress is not exclusively of a political sort; the picture seems to depend upon the expectation of a world-catastrophe, similar to the Israelitish prophecies. Amos 8:9 may be compared with the oracle just cited. It is curious that Amos

¹ The texts are gathered conveniently by Ranke in *Altorientalische Texte und Bilder*, edited by Gressmann, Part I, pp. 204 ff. From this book are taken, too, the above-cited translations of the Babylonian texts by Ungnad.

8:8 furnishes a comparison with the Nile, an image of Egyptian origin. Further we may recall to mind Amos 9:11: the hut of David broken down shall be repaired, that is: Northern Israel and Judah shall be connected again. Compare with this the Egyptian prophecy: "He shall gain the crown of Upper Egypt and win for himself the crown of Lower Egypt." Similarly as the mother of Immanuel is spoken of, so here "the wife from Nubia" is mentioned, who will bear the messianic king, and so on. But all these details cannot in themselves prove a dependence of Israelitish prophecy upon Egyptian; for it is possible that in all these cases there is an analogous development.

A connection between the messianic hope of Israel and that of Egypt would be necessary, if there was in Egypt too a king of the first time, whose return was expected. In fact, we find allusions to a tale that once the god Re ruled on earth over man and gods. Deserving of regard is the hypothesis of Gardiner,¹ that the wise Ipuwêr, who (the first time) like an Egyptian Nathan censures the king for the evil and ill fortune of his reign, then paints the ideal of a good king. The first time he says: "It is confusion that thou bringest throughout the land together with the noise of tumult. . . . Thou hast spoken falsehood. . . . Would that thou mightest taste some of the miseries, then wouldst thou say" Afterward he says: ". . . lack of people . . . Re . . . He bringeth [?] coolness to that which is hot. It is said: he is the herdsman of mankind. No evil is in his heart. When his herds are few, he passes the day to gather them together, their hearts being on fire [?]. Would that he had perceived their nature [?] in the first generation [of men]; then he would have suppressed evil, he would have stretched forth his arms against it, he would have destroyed their seed [??] and their inheritance." It is likely these words are to be regarded "as a description of Re, whom ancient legends regarded as the first king of Egypt, and whose reign was looked back upon as a sort of Golden Age" (Gardiner). Unfortunately there is no proof that the Egyptians expected a return of Re and the lost paradise, or that the messianic king was painted by the prophets with the colors of the god-king Re. But

¹ Alan H. Gardiner, *The Admonitions of an Egyptian Sage*. Leipzig, 1909.

according to all we know hitherto, such a hope does not seem to be excluded, especially since the reigning kings were respected as natural sons of Re.

Hence we cannot yet pass a sure judgment concerning the origin of the messianic hope. The probability is more in favor of Egypt than Babylonia, although there may have been similar expectations throughout the nearer Orient;¹ and, moreover, in Palestine the influences of Egypt and Babylonia may have crossed. Now, looking over the whole material, we may search out *the psychological roots*. The last outlet for the messianic hope we have found is the conception of the returning paradise and of the returning paradise-king. This is not to be separated from the idea of the world's destruction and the return of chaos; certainly it may be said that the end of the world is the *prius* and has caused the return of the Golden Age. Whence these thoughts grew up is a problem in itself, not to be solved by the way. At any rate, in the later times these ideas are in existence; they are handed down from generation to generation, and are more or less active. The only development is that the mythological ideas are historicized always anew; that is, they are applied to the situations of any time, but only under the constraint of important historical events, and by these they are modified. This we may illustrate best through the development of an analogous idea. About the time of Jesus the conception is current that the coming of the Christ is to be preceded by the satanic Antichrist. When a man like Nero arises persecuting Christianity with great cruelty, he is regarded by the Christians as the Antichrist. Thus the conception of the returning Nero is to be explained. When Napoleon crushed Germany with iron fist, the idea of the Antichrist revived again, but now Napoleon was the Antichrist. This shows the imposing grandeur of Napoleon, however destructive he may have been. According to this, the Babylonians, the Assyrians, and still earlier the Ephraimites and Syrians were thought to be the satanic powers, with whom chaos returns. The battles of God with Tiâmat, Leviathan, and other dragons are to be repeated in the end-time;

¹ In the inscription of the Hittite king *KLM* newly published I cannot discover any messianic element. There is only the style of antithesis *largely spread*.

and every time when the world trembled with fear of foreign conquerors or re-echoed the endless calls to arms, poets or prophets alluded to the battles of the last days. In the same manner the idea of the returning paradise-king changed from time to time. When David gained the love of Israel, and as the remembrance of his person and his kingdom continued, the returning paradise-king became the returning David. And when Frederick Barbarossa got the love of the Germans, they expected the returning *Kaiser Rotbart* from the *Kyffhäuser*. So this idea is the last shout of the "messianic" hope.

The grandeur of Israel's prophets is not imperiled by the supposition or the proof of dependence upon older ideas. Nathan's boldness in the presence of David is admirable, even if Ipuwêr, the Egyptian sage, should have thrown a similar "Thou liest" into the face of his king. And Isaiah's prophecies of the Messiah do not lose any of their ethico-religious depth, even if the Egyptians and the Canaanites already knew a messianic hope. Israel's prophets have embodied their finest and sublimest thoughts in the Messiah's person; and like bright threads of gold the prophetic ideas are woven into the purple robe of the popular faith. All that we call "fleshly" messianic hope is of popular origin; of this sort are the ideas of the coming kingdom, when the whole world will do homage to Israel, when the treasures of the nations shall be gathered to Jerusalem, and when foreign kings shall build the golden gates of the city. The greater prophets, however, emphasized justice regnant over the king, the officers, and the whole people; the kingdom of peace, when all disquietude is over, and every war is ended; the fear of God beaming forth from Jerusalem and giving light to all the nations; and the blessedness of God's children living in sinless innocence and performing their duties for his name's sake.